

FACT SHEET | Permitting Reform

Better Government for a Better Minnesota

Governor Dayton has made streamlining environmental permitting a top priority. His administration has already made permitting faster and more predictable for Minnesota businesses, while ensuring strong environmental protections remain in place. As part of the Unsession, the Governor is proposing new reforms that would ensure that 11,000 of the 15,000 permit requests each year are completed in 90 days or less. Many of the remaining permits would be completed in less than 150 days.

Major Progress, More Room for Improvement

- **Minnesota Has Made Major Progress.** Before the Governor overhauled the permitting process in 2011, businesses were often forced to wait months, and sometimes even years, to have their permits approved. Long, unnecessary delays cost businesses time and money, and stifled job creation. Now, most permits are issued in 150 days or less – but the Governor thinks our state can do even better.
- **Unnecessary Delays for Low-Risk, Non-Controversial Permits Remain.** A number of small, non-federal permits present a low risk to the environment and human health. But businesses are still required to re-apply for these permits every five years, costing time and money.
- **More Process Improvements Needed.** State agencies have made tremendous progress in the last three years, overhauling their processes for issuing permits and dramatically improving turnaround times. But more changes are needed to make the permitting process more flexible and efficient.

Specific Changes to Improve Permitting Efficiency

- **Ten-Year Permits for Low-Risk Projects.** Rather than asking businesses to re-apply for non-controversial permits every five years, the Governor has proposed a new ten-year permit for non-federal permits that present a low risk to our environment and human health.
- **A Two-Tiered Strategy for Streamlining Permit Review.** The Pollution Control Agency and the Department of Natural Resources review and issue a wide variety of complex permits every year. To ensure these permits are reviewed responsibly and efficiently, the Governor has proposed creating a new two-tiered system that will streamline the permitting process.
 - **90-Day Goal.** A projected 11,000 permits every year – including the most general and registration permits for air, water, and land – would be issued in 90 days or less.
 - **150-Day Goal.** Complex air, water, and land construction permits that require public comment periods and more detailed review would be issued in 150 days.
- **Making the Permitting Process More Flexible.** If a business wants to expedite their project, they can help pay for private consultants and staff overtime at state agencies after a permit application has been submitted for approval. To make the process even more flexible, the Governor's plan would allow businesses to speed up the permit process before it starts – creating a fee-for-service model that would involve state agencies earlier in the process to eliminate confusion and ensure the business and state regulators have clear expectations and a shared understanding of the project.